

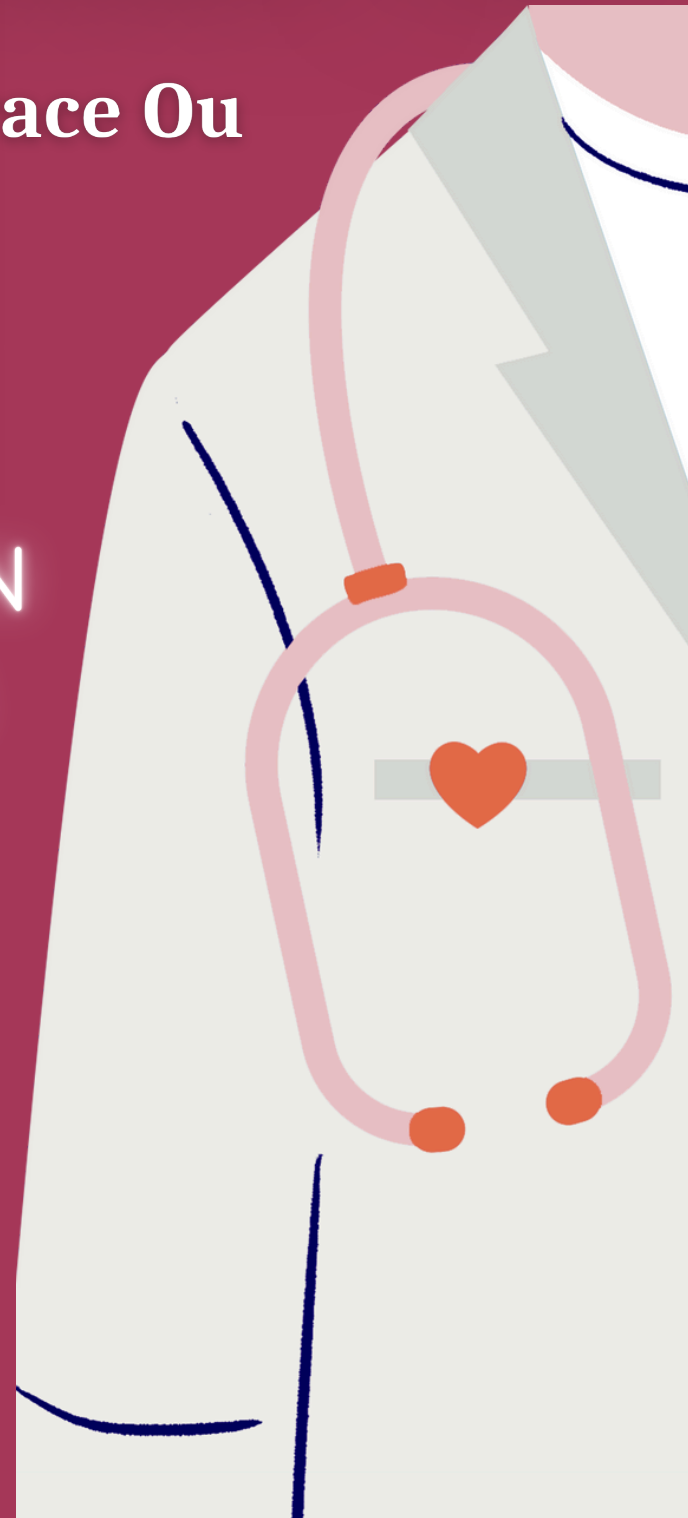
CULTURAL COMPETENCE IN HEALTHCARE



Grace Ou

A FOCUS ON ASIAN AMERICAN POPULATIONS

Explore the unique cultural factors impacting medical care and health outcomes in Asian American communities, with an emphasis on cultural beliefs, traditional practices, and communication barriers. Learn about the importance of cultural awareness in providing effective and equitable care.



What Cultural Competency Is:

“Delivering effective, quality care to patients who have diverse beliefs, attitudes, values, and backgrounds. This practice requires systems that can personalize health care according to cultural and linguistic differences”

Tulane University, 2021



The Goal:

Eliminate obstacles to proper and quality patient care.
Enhance patient–provider communication and understanding.

Factors Shaping Patient Care:



Race & Ethnicity
Cultural Beliefs & Practices
Socio–Economic Status
Health Literacy
Education Level
Access to Healthcare
Geographic Location
Communication Barriers
Historical/Systemic Inequalities
Environment/Housing
Psychosocial Factors

These elements are **NOT mutually exclusive!** They continuously interact with one another, shaping various aspects of patient care, such as:

- Ability to access care
- How patients perceive symptoms
- When/how/whether patients seek care



Common Traditional Asian Medical Practices

East Asia

Herbal prescriptions
Acupuncture
Moxibustion
Cupping therapy
Massage
Naprapathy
Tai Chi



Many diverse practices!
Some overlap due to years of cultural exchange, influence, and shared beliefs on healing!

South Asia

Ayurveda
Yoga
Meditation
Naturopathy
Homeopathy
Sowa Rigpa
Siddha
Unani



South East Asia

Massage therapy
Jamu
Unani
Acupuncture
Herbal prescriptions
Cupping therapy
Moxibustion
Ayurveda



Tension Between Western & Traditional Medicine

Western

- Evidence-based methodology
- Focus on technology
- Surgical operations
- Pharmaceuticals
- Clinical treatment of symptoms



vs.

Traditional

- Rooted in cultural beliefs
- Holistic views of health/wellbeing
- Restoration of balance between body, mind, and spirit

Western Criticisms:

Traditional medicine is often viewed with skepticism by those who practice Western medicine.

Why?

Despite ongoing research and increasing support, some areas remain understudied



Many traditional practices are difficult to standardize or study using conventional scientific methods

BUT... It's More Than JUST Medicine

Deeply trusted by Asian communities who have used them for centuries, these practices are deeply engrained in culture and upbringing, serving as a connection to heritage, especially for immigrants, and are often viewed as less invasive than Western practices.

Navigating Real-World Scenarios as a Future Provider

For instance...

Elderly Chinese woman, 78, suffering from chronic lower back pain, worsening in the last 4 months. You recommend ibuprofen for pain relief & potential steroid spine injections.



However...

She prefers traditional Chinese methods like acupuncture, herbal remedies, & cupping therapy. Her mother & grandmother used them & they seem less invasive than Western practices

1) Acknowledge the Strengths of Both Systems



While your recommendation is supported by clinical evidence, acupuncture, herbal remedies, and cupping therapy have also demonstrated effectiveness

2) Recognize Patient Trust in & Cultural Connection to Practices



Traditional practices may provide peace of mind, connection to culture, a sense of familiarity, and perceived safety (natural ingredients, less invasive)

3) Educate Without Dismissing



Share evidence-based information about Western treatments without undermining traditional practices. Reassure them that their health & wellness are your top priority

4) Emphasize Importance of Disclosing



Some Asian patients refrain from disclosing use of traditional methods to their Western providers, viewing the two medical domains as entirely independent, and fearing disapproval or breach of trust

What the Goal is NOT:

The goal is NOT to simply try to win your patient over with Western practices. It IS finding the best way. This might mean Western medication. BUT, it might also involve integration of traditional practices, especially if:



1) No potential of harmful drug interactions

2) Gives patient peace of mind & sense of involvement in their care



Culturally Competent Care: Key Strategies

Self-Reflection

Reflect on personal cultural beliefs, biases, assumptions.

Communication

Use simple, everyday language, avoiding medical jargon. Actively listen without judgement. Professional interpretation over family or friends to ensure accuracy, confidentiality, & to avoid miscommunication.

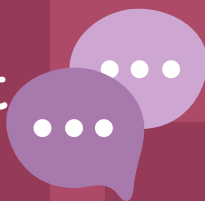


Education:

Actively seek knowledge about cultural norms & traditions of your patient population. Stay up to date on global health trends.

Be Open to Traditional Medicine

Acknowledge strengths of traditional practices & inquire upon patient use. Incorporate when beneficial or neutral.



Implement Culturally Relevant Preventative Care

Risk factors are more prevalent in certain populations, like those for Hepatitis C, hypertension, & diabetes in some Asian populations due to socioeconomic disparity, structural inequality, and/or lifestyle factors.

Why is Any of This Important?

Suicide is one of the leading causes of death for Asian Americans--those aged 20–24 have the highest suicide rate and Asian Americans have the highest suicide rate among females of all racial and ethnic groups aged 65–84.

Asian Americans are less likely to get mental health treatment, and are least likely to see themselves as needing treatment.



Asian Americans have the lowest cancer screening rates and are typically diagnosed at a later stage compared to other racial and ethnic groups.

Higher disease incidence: The incidence of breast cancer among AAPI women increased from 87.0 to 97.8 cases per 100,000 women from 1990 to 2001, a growth rate that has increased faster than any other racial/ethnic group.

Asian Americans have a high prevalence of the following conditions and risk factors: chronic obstructive pulmonary disease, hepatitis B, HIV/AIDS, smoking, tuberculosis, and liver disease. Contributing factors include infrequent medical visits, language and cultural barriers, and lack of health insurance.

Cultural Humility: A Guiding Principle

Recognize the limits of your knowledge of others. Adopt a mindset of LIFELONG learning & self-evaluation, rather than simply acquiring a fixed set of skills or knowledge about different cultures.



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